

2/16/2016

US Muslims Make Adjustments for Ramadan



2 Live



USA

US Muslims Make Adjustments for Ramadan

July 24, 2013 Julie Taboh



▶ 2:33

[↓ Direct link](#)

Share


[See comments](#)

FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA — Muslims are a small minority in the U.S., so it can be a challenge for some of the faithful to observe their religion in a society that doesn't follow the same rituals.

This is especially so during Ramadan, the Islamic holy month, which this year falls on the hottest and longest days of the year. But some Washington-area Muslim Americans find that their employers do try to accommodate their needs during 30 days of fasting from dawn to dusk.

2/16/2016

US Muslims Make Adjustments for Ramadan

Sami Malek has been fasting from dawn to dusk since the start of Ramadan. As a waiter at a popular Middle Eastern restaurant and market, he is constantly surrounded by the sight and smell of food and drink. But that hasn't tempted the 23-year-old graduate student to deviate from his faith.

"When I make good service and people are enjoying the food, I feel happy," he said. "When people tell me 'It's good food, I like it, it's very delicious,' I feel good."

Malek is observing his first Ramadan in the U.S. since arriving from Algeria less than a year ago. He said it's about mind over matter.

"If you want to do Ramadan, you do it, and you have to do it because you are Muslim," he said. "Usually the first day is hard; first day, second day, but after that, it's like habituation."

Malek is fortunate to have his employer's support. Imad Rababeh, manager of the Mount of Lebanon restaurant where Malek works, tries to make accommodations for all his Muslim employees.

"To start off, I give them frequent breaks throughout the entire day to go pray," he said. "I pretty much give them all the time to eat at Iftar time and they have frequent breaks throughout the day and if they get tired I allow them to sit."

Rababeh is not alone. There are a few other employers that also try to accommodate the religious needs of their Muslim employees.

2/16/2016

US Muslims Make Adjustments for Ramadan



US Muslim Rizwan Jaka (in gray shirt) prays with fellow employees at his workplace. (Photo by Shad Imam)

Rizwan Jaka, a board member of the All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS), the largest mosque in the Washington, D.C. area, said the American corporation that he works for has been very respectful of him as a Muslim.

"When the Muslims who work in our company are having their daily prayers they provide us space for prayer so that we can have a quiet place to pray, and that's year round," he said. "And then, beyond that in the month of Ramadan when we're fasting, the company is very respectful of that as well...Like if there's a team lunch, instead of having a team lunch we'll have a team dinner after sunset."

Imam Johari, director of outreach at the Dar Al-Hijrah Islamic Center outside Washington, said Ramadan is not supposed to be a hardship.

2/16/2016

US Muslims Make Adjustments for Ramadan

“It is meant for people who are mature, who are healthy,” he explained. “But if you’re pregnant or you’re sick or you’re on a journey, or you’re elderly or you’re a minor, you are not obligated to fast.”

But there are challenges. Twenty-year-old Muntasir Sarsour points to things that are not always within his control.

“You can’t get away from immodest girls unless you live in a cave. That’s not going to happen,” he said. “But you just try your best to lower your gaze and keep on moving.”

“There’s difficulties and distractions everywhere, especially in this society here in America,” added his friend Junaid Khan. “You can’t always rely on God to do everything for you. So personally, inside of your heart, you have to try your best.”

Related



US Muslims Mark Start of Ramadan



Muslim-Americans Observe Ramadan with Fasts and Prayer

You might like also

2/16/2016

US Muslims Make Adjustments for Ramadan



USA

Obama to Host Strategically Vital ASEAN Summit



Americans Can't Always Name That President



USA

Leaving Scalia Replacement to 2017 Would Mean Unusually Long Vacancy

Your opinion

This forum has been closed.

All comments (11)

Yoshi (Sapporo)

July 25, 2013 2:19 AM

I admire the Muslims to obey strictly the rules of Koran. I learn in this article that they note the importance of acting modestly and being patient in the way of life. Ramadan is exempted from sick, elder and minor people. Nevertheless, am I the last person who think there are too many rituals to keep in Islam? Employers, ignoring cost-

2/16/2016

US Muslims Make Adjustments for Ramadan

performance, who are generous enough to accommodate Islamists look also very patient. I hope Islamists would not be too much bound by the rules. They live for their happy lives and not for the Koran. This is only my two cents. Thank you.

+ 0 - 0

Noor

July 26, 2013 4:52 AM

Some are not too strict they do the bare minimum, but in Ramadan, us Muslims try to get closer to God. Hope that helps and have a great day.

+ 0 - 0

Load more comments

FOLLOW US



INFO PAGES

